

AN OPIUM EATER IN AMERICA.

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by

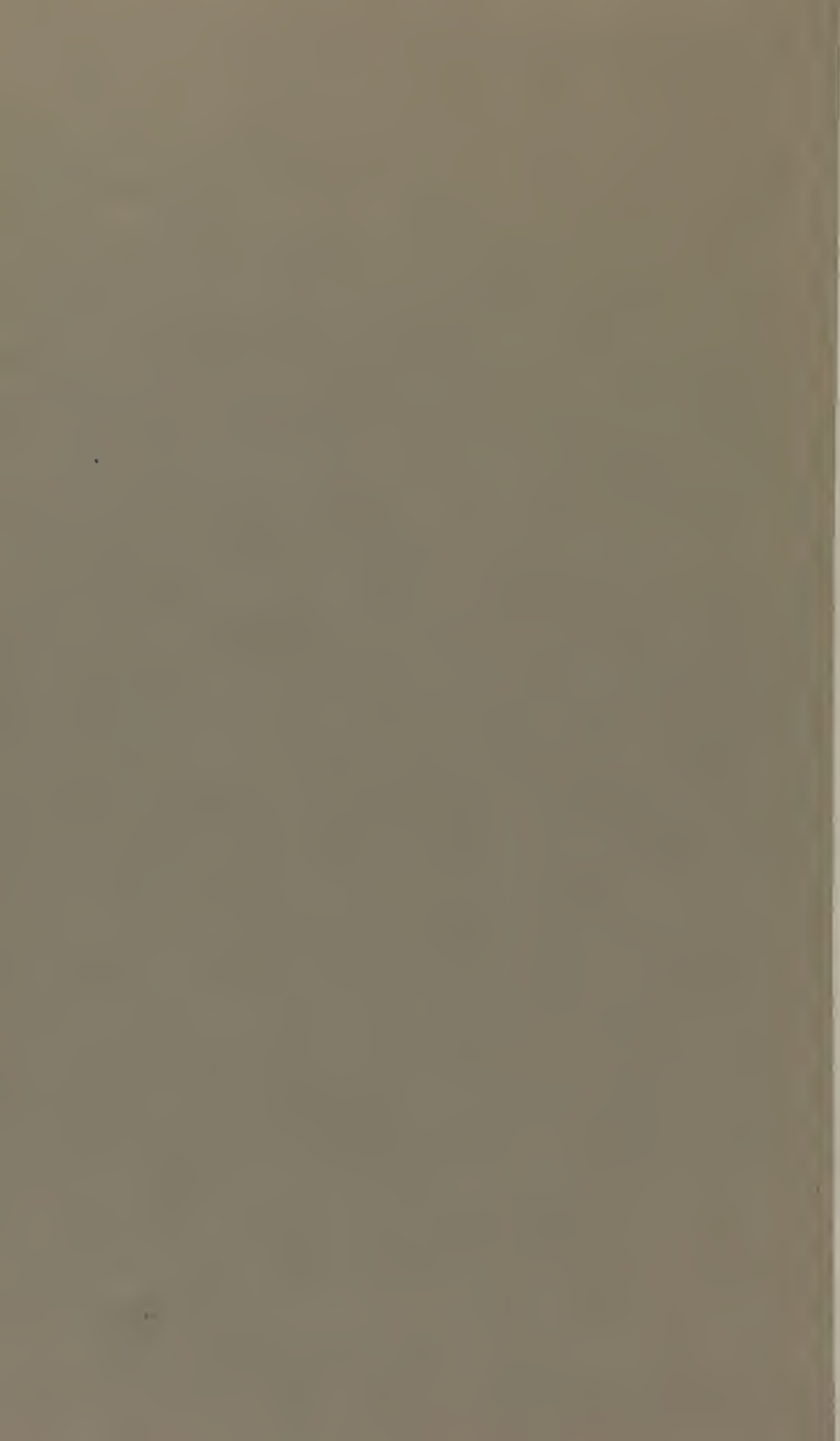
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Wm. Blair.

1842

in

Knickerbocker. July, 1842



## AN OPIUM-EATER IN AMERICA.

‘Esse quid hoc dicum, quod tam mihi dura videntur  
 Strata, neque in lecto pallia nostra sedent?  
 Et vacuus somno noctem, quam longa, perigi;  
 Lassaque vessati corporis assa dolent.’

OVID AMOR.

BEFORE I state the results of my experience as an opium-eater, it will perhaps not be uninteresting, and it certainly will conduce to the clearer understanding of such statement, if I give a slight and brief sketch of my habits and history previous to my first indulgence in the infernal drug which has imbittered my existence for seven most weary years.

The death of my father when I was little more than twelve months old made it necessary that I should receive only such an education as would qualify me to pursue some business in my native town of Birmingham; and in all probability I should at this moment be entering orders or making out invoices in that great emporium of buttons and blackguards, had I not (whether fortunately or otherwise I pretend not to decide) at a very early age evinced a decided and absorbing passion for reading, which the free access to a tolerably large library enabled me to indulge, until it had grown to be a confirmed habit of mind, which when the attention of my *friends* was called to the subject, had become too strong to be broken through; and with the usual foolish family vanity they determined to indulge a taste so early and decidedly developed, in the expectation, I verily believe, of some day catching a reflected beam from the fame and glory which I was to win by my genius; for by that mystical name was the mere musty talent of ‘*ahellico librorum*’ called. The consequence was that I was sent, when eight years of age, to a public school. I had however before this tormented my elder brother with ceaseless importunity, until he had consented to teach me Latin; and by secretly poring over my sister’s books, I had contrived to gain a tolerable book-knowledge of French.

From that hour my fate was decided. I applied with unwearied devotion to the study of the classics — the only branch of education attended to in the school; and I even considered it a favor to be allowed to translate, write exercises and themes, and to compose Latin verses for the more idle of my school-fellows. At the same time I devoured all books of whatever description, which came in my way: poems, novels, history, metaphysics, or works of science, with an indiscriminating appetite, which has proved very injurious to me through life. I drank as eagerly of the muddy and stagnant pool of literature, as of the pure and sparkling fountains glowing in the many-hued sun-light of genius. After two years had been

spent in this manner, I was removed to another school, the principal of which, although a fair mathematician, was a wretched classical scholar. In fact I frequently construed passages of Virgil, which I had not previously looked at, when he himself was forced to refer to Davidson for assistance. I stayed with him however two years, during which time I spent all the money I could get in purchasing Greek and Hebrew books, of which languages I learned the rudiments, and obtained considerable knowledge without any instruction. After a year's residence at the house of my brother-in-law, which I passed in studying Italian and Persian, the Bishop of Litchfield, examining chaplain, to whom I had been introduced in terms of the most hyperbolic praise, prevailed on his diocesan and the Earl of Calthorpe to share the expense of my farther education.

In consequence of this unexpected good fortune, I was now placed under the care of the Rev. Thomas Fry, Rector of the Village of Emberton in Buckinghamshire, a clergyman of great piety and profound learning, with whom I remained about fifteen months, pursuing the study of languages with increased ardor. During the whole of that period I never allowed myself more than four hours' sleep; and still unsatisfied, I very generally spent the whole night, twice a week, in the insane pursuit of those avenues to distinction to which alone my ambition was confined. I took no exercise, and the income allowed me was so small that I could not afford a meat dinner more than once a week, and at the same time set apart the half of that allowance for the purchase of books, which I had determined to do. I smoked incessantly; for I now required some stimulus, as my health was much injured by my unrelaxing industry. My digestion was greatly impaired; and the constitution of iron which Nature had given me threatened to break down ere long under the effects of the systematic neglect with which I treated its repeated warnings. I suffered from constant head-ache; my total inactivity caused the digestive organs to become torpid; and the innutritious nature of the food which I allowed myself would not supply me with the strength which my assiduous labor required. My nerves were dreadfully shaken; and at the age of fourteen I exhibited the external symptoms of old age. I was feeble and emaciated; and had this mode of life continued twelve months longer, I must have sank under it.

I had during these fifteen months thought and read much on the subject of revealed religion, and had devoted a considerable portion of my time to an examination of the evidences advanced by the advocates of Christianity, which resulted in a reluctant conviction of their utter weakness and inability. No sooner was I aware that so complete a change of opinion had taken place, than I wrote to my patron stating the fact, and explaining the process by which I had arrived at such a conclusion. The reply I received was a peremptory order to return to my mother's house immediately; and on arriving there, the first time I had entered it for some years, I was met by the information that I had nothing more to expect from

the countenance of those who had supplied me with the means of prosecuting my studies 'to so bad a purpose.' I was so irritated by what I considered the unjustifiable harshness of this decision, that at the moment I wrote a haughty and angry letter to one of the parties, which of course widened the breach, and made the separation between us eternal.

What was I now to do? I was unfit for any business, both by habit, inclination, and constitution. My health was ruined, and hopeless poverty stared me in the face; when a distinguished solicitor in my native town, who by the way has since become celebrated in the political world, offered to receive me as a clerk. I at once accepted the offer; but knowing that in my *then* condition it was impossible for me to perform the duties required of me, I decided on TAKING OPIUM! The strange confessions of DE QUINCY had long been a favorite with me. The first part had in fact been given me both as a model in English composition, and also as an exercise to be rendered into Patavinian Latin. The latter part, the 'Miseries of Opium,' I had most unaccountably always neglected to read. Again and again, when my increasing debility had threatened to bring my studies to an abrupt conclusion, I had meditated this experiment, but an indefinable and shadowy fear had as often stayed my hand. But now that I knew that unless I could by artificial stimuli obtain a sudden increase of strength I must STARVE, I no longer hesitated. I was desperate. I believed that something horrible would result from it, though my imagination, the most vivid, could not conjure up visions of horror half so terrific as the fearful reality. I knew that for every hour of comparative ease and comfort its treacherous alliance might confer upon me *now*, I must endure days of bodily suffering; but I did not, could not, conceive the mental hell into whose fierce corroding fires I was about to plunge!

All that occurred during the first day is imperishably engraved upon my memory. It was about a week previous to the day appointed for my *début* in my new character as an attorney's clerk; and when I arose, I was depressed in mind, and a racking pain, to which I had lately been subject, was maddening me. I could scarcely manage to crawl into the breakfast-room. I had previously procured a draehm of opium, and I took two grains with my coffee. It did not produce any change in my feelings. I took two more — still without effect; and by six o'clock in the evening I had taken ten grains. While I was sitting at tea, I felt a strange sensation, totally unlike any thing I had ever felt before; a gradual *creeping thrill*, which in a few minutes occupied every part of my body, lulling to sleep the before-mentioned racking pain, producing a pleasing glow from head to foot, and inducing a sensation of dreamy exhilaration, (if the phrase be intelligible to others as it is to me,) similar in nature but not in degree to the drowsiness caused by wine, though not inclining me to sleep; in fact so far from it, that I longed to engage in some active exercise; to sing, dance, or leap. I then resolved to go to the theatre — the last place I should



the day before have dreamed of visiting; for the sight of cheerfulness in others made me doubly gloomy.

I went; and so vividly did I feel my vitality—for in this state of delicious exhilaration even mere excitement seemed absolute elysium—that I could not resist the temptation to break out in the strangest vagaries, until my companions thought me deranged. As I ran up the stairs I rushed after and flung back every one who was above me. I escaped numberless beatings solely through the interference of my friends. After I had been seated a few minutes, the nature of the excitement was changed, and a 'waking sleep' succeeded. The actors on the stage vanished; the stage itself lost its ideality; and before my entranced sight magnificent halls stretched out in endless succession, with gallery above gallery, while the roof was blazing with gems, like stars whose rays alone illuminated the whole building, which was thronged with strange gigantic figures, like the wild possessors of a lost globe, such as Lord Byron has described in *Cain*; as beheld by the *Fratricide*, when guided by Lucifer he wandered among the shadowy existences of those worlds which had been destroyed to make way for our pigmy earth. I will not attempt farther to describe the magnificent vision which a little pill of 'brown gum' had conjured up from the realm of ideal being. No words that I can command would do justice to its Titanian splendor and immensity.

At midnight I was roused from my dreary abstraction; and on my return home the blood in my veins seemed to 'run lightning;' and I knocked down (for I had the strength of a giant at that moment) the first watchman I met: of course there was 'a row,' and for some minutes a battle-royal raged in New-Street, the principal thoroughfare of the town, between my party and the 'Charleys;' who, although greatly superior in numbers, were sadly 'milled;' for we were all somewhat scientific bruisers, that sublime art or science having been cultivated with great assiduity at the public school, through which I had as was customary fought my way. I reached home at two in the morning, with a pair of 'Oxford spectacles' which confined me to the house for a week. I slept disturbedly, haunted by terrific dreams and oppressed by the Night-mare and her nine-fold, and awoke with a dreadful head-ache; stiff in every joint, and with deadly sickness of the stomach, which lasted for two or three days; my throat contracted and parched, my tongue furred, my eyes bloodshot, and the whole surface of my body burning hot. I did not have recourse to opium again for three days; for the strength it had excited did not till then fail me. When partially recovered from the nausea the first dose had caused, my spirits were good, though not exuberant; but I could eat nothing, and was annoyed by an insatiable thirst. I went to the office, and for six months performed the services required of me without lassitude or depression of spirits; though never again did I experience the same delicious sensations as on that memorable night, which is an 'oasis in the desert' of my subsequent existence; life I cannot call it, for the '*vivido vis animi et corporis*' was extinct.

In the seventh month my misery commenced. Burning heat, attended with constant thirst, then began to torment me from morning till night : my skin became scurfy ; the skin of my feet and hands peeled off ; my tongue was always furred ; a feeling of contraction in the bowels was continual ; my eyes were strained and discolored, and I had unceasing head-ache. But internal and external heat was the pervading feeling and appearance. My digestion became still weaker, and my incessant costiveness was painful in the extreme. The reader must not however imagine that all these symptoms appeared suddenly and at once ; they came on gradually, though with frightful rapidity, until I became a '*Morburum Mole*,' as a Romanic physician, whose lucubrations I met with and perused with great amusement some years since in a little country ale-house, (God knows how it got there,) poetically expresses it. I could not sleep for hours after I had lain down, and consequently was unable to rise in time to attend the office in the morning, though as yet no visions of horror haunted my slumbers. Mr. P., my employer, bore with this for some months ; but at length his patience was wearied ; and I was informed that I must attend at nine in the morning. I could not ; for even if I rose at seven, after two or three hours' unhealthy and fitful sleep, I was unable to walk or exert myself in any way for at least two hours. I was at this time taking laudanum, and had no appetite for any thing but coffee and acid fruits. I could and did drink great quantities of ale, though it would not, as nothing would, quench my thirst.

Matters continued in this state for fifteen months, during which time the only comfortable hours I spent were in the evening, when freed from the duties of the office, I sat down to study, which it is rather singular I was able to do with as strong zest and as unwearied application as ever ; as will appear, when I mention that in those fifteen months I read through in the evenings the whole of Cicero, Tacitus, the *Corpus Poetarum*, (Latinorum) Boëthius, *Scriptores Historiæ Augustinæ*, Homer, *Corpus Græcarum Tragediarum*, great part of Plato, and a large mass of philological works. In fact, in the evening I generally felt comparatively well, not being troubled with many of the above-mentioned symptoms. These evenings were the very happiest of my life. I had ample means for the purchase of books, for I lived very cheap on bread, ale, and coffee ; and I had access to a library containing all the Latin classics — Valpy's edition in one hundred and fifty volumes, octavo, a magnificent publication — and about fifteen thousand other books. Toward the end of the year 1829 I established at my own expense and edited myself a magazine (there was not one in a town as large and as populous as New-York !) by which I lost a considerable sum ; though the pleasure I derived from my monthly labors amply compensated me. In December of that year my previous sufferings became light in comparison with those which now seized upon me, never completely to leave me again.

One night, after taking about fifty grains of opium, I sat down in my arm-chair to read the confession of a Russian who had murdered

his brother because he was the chosen of her whom both loved. It was recorded by a French priest who visited him in his last moments, and was powerfully and eloquently written. I dozed while reading it; and immediately I was present in the prison-cell of the Fratricide; I saw his ghastly and death-dewed features, his despairing yet defying look, the gloomy and impenetrable dungeon; the dying lamp, which served but to render 'darkness visible;' and the horror-struck yet pitying expression of the priest's countenance; *but there I lost my identity.* Though I was the recipient of these impressions, yet I was not myself separately and distinctively existent and sentient; but my entity was confounded with that of not only the two figures before me, but of the inanimate objects surrounding them. This state of compound existence I can no farther describe. While in this state I composed the 'Fratricide's Death,' or rather it composed *itself* and forced itself upon my memory without any activity or violation on my part.

And here again another phenomenon presented itself. The images reflected, if the expression be allowable, in the verses rose bodily and with perfect distinctness before me, simultaneously with their verbal representatives; and when I roused myself (I had not been *sleeping* but was only *abstracted*) all remained clear and distinct in my memory. From that night for six months darkness always brought the most horrible fancies and opticular and auricular or acoustical delusions of a frightful nature, so vivid and real, that instead of a blessing, sleep became a curse; and the hours of darkness became hours which seemed days of misery. For many consecutive nights I dared not undress myself nor 'put out the light,' lest the moment I lay down some '*monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens*' should blast my sight with his hellish aspect! I had a double sense of sight and sound; one real, the other visionary; both equally strong and apparently real; so that while I distinctly heard imaginary footsteps ascending the stairs, the door opening, and my curtains drawn, I at the same time as plainly heard any actual sound in or outside the house, and could not remark the slightest difference between them; and while I *saw* an imaginary assassin standing by my bed bending over me with a lamp in one hand and a dagger in the other, I could see any real tangible object which the degree of light that might be then in the room made visible. Though these visionary fears and imaginary objects had presented themselves to me every night for months, yet I never could convince myself of their non-existence; and every fresh appearance caused suffering of as intense and as deadly horror as on the first night! And so great was the confusion of the real with the unreal, that I nearly became a convert to Bishop Berkeley's non-reality doctrines. My health was also rapidly becoming worse; and before I had taken my opium in the morning, I had become unable to move hand or foot, and of course could not rise from my bed until I had received strength from the 'damnable dirt.' I could not attend the office at all in the morning, and was forced to throw up my articles, and as the only chance left me of gaining a liveli-



hood, turn to writing for magazines for support. I left B. and proceeded to London, where I engaged with Charles Knight to supply the chapters on the use of elephants in the wars of the ancients for the 'History of Elephants,' then preparing for publication in the series of the Library of Entertaining Knowledge. For this purpose I obtained permission to use the Library of the British Museum for six months, and again devoted myself with renewed ardor to my favorite studies.

But 'what a falling off was there!' My memory was impaired; and in reading I was conscious of a confusion of mind which prevented my clearly comprehending the full meaning of what I read. Some organ appeared to be defective. My judgment too was weakened, and I was frequently guilty of the most absurd actions, which at the time I considered wise and prudent. The strong common sense which I had at one time boasted of, deserted me. I lived in a dreamy, imaginative state, which completely disqualified me for managing my own affairs. I spent large sums of money in a day, and then starved for a month; and all this while the '*chateaux en espagne*,' which had once only afforded me an idle amusement, now usurped the place of the realities of life, and led me into many errors and even unjustifiable acts of immorality, which lowered me in the estimation of my acquaintances and friends, who saw the effect but never dreamed the cause. Even those who knew I was an opium-eater, not being aware of the effects which the habitual use of it produced, attributed my mad conduct to either want of principle or aberration of intellect; and I thus lost several of my best friends, and temporarily alienated many others.

After a month or two passed in this employment, I regained a portion of strength sufficient to enable me to obtain a livelihood by reporting on my own account in the courts of law in Westminster any cause which I judged of importance enough to afford a reasonable chance of selling again; and by supplying reviews and occasional original articles to the periodicals, the Monthly, New Monthly, Metropolitan, etc. My health continued to improve, probably in consequence of my indulging in higher living and taking much more exercise than I had done for two or three years; as I had no need of buying books, having the use of at least five hundred thousand volumes in the Museum. I was at last fortunate enough to obtain the office of parliamentary reporter to a morning paper, which produced about three hundred pounds a year; but after working on an average fourteen or fifteen hours a day for a few months, I was obliged to resign the situation, and again depend for support on the irregular employment I had before been engaged in, and for which I was now alone fit. My constitution now appeared to have completely sunk under the destroying influence of the immense quantity of opium I had for some months taken—two hundred, two hundred and fifty, and three hundred grains a day. I was frequently obliged to repeat the dose several times a day, as my stomach had become so weak that the opium would not remain upon it; and I was beside afflicted with continual vomiting after

having eaten any thing. I really believed that I could not last much longer. *Tie-doloreux* was also added to my other sufferings; constant head-ache, occasional spasms, heart-burn, pains in the legs and back, and a general irritability of the nerves, which would not allow me to remain above a few minutes in the same position. My temper became soured and morose. I was careless of every thing, and drank to excess, in the hope of thus supplying the place of the stimulus which had lost its power.

At length I was compelled to keep my bed by a violent attack of pleurisy, which has since seized me about the same time every year. My digestion was so thoroughly ruined, that I was frequently almost maddened by the suffering which indigestion occasioned. I could not sleep, though I was no longer troubled with visions, which had left me about three months. At last I became so ill that I was forced to leave London and visit my mother in Kenilworth, where I stayed; writing occasionally, and instructing a few pupils in Greek and Hebrew. I was also now compelled to sell my library, which contained several Arabic and Persian MANUSCRIPTS, a complete collection of Latin authors, and nearly a complete one of Greek; a large collection of Hebrew and Rabbinic works, which I had obtained at a great expense and with great trouble — all went; the only relics of it I was able to retain were the ‘*Corporum Poetarum*’ and ‘*Græcorum et Latinorum*’; and I have never since been able to collect another library. Idleness, good living, and constant exercise, revived me; but with returning strength my nocturnal visitors returned, and again my nights were made dreadful. I was ‘terrified through visions’ similar to those which had so alarmed me at first, and I was obliged to drink deeply at night to enable me to sleep at all.

In this state I continued till June, 1833, when I determined once more to return to London; and I left Kenilworth without informing any one of my intention the night before. The curate of the parish called at my lodgings to inform me that he had obtained the gift of six hundred pounds to enable me to reside at Oxford until I could graduate. Had I stayed twenty-four hours longer, I should not now be living in hopeless poverty in a foreign country; but pursuing under more favorable auspices than ever brightened my path before those studies which supported and cheered me in poverty and illness, and with a fair prospect of obtaining that learned fame for which I had longed so ardently from my boyhood, and in the vain endeavor to obtain which I had sacrificed my health and denied myself not only the pleasures and luxuries but even the necessities of life. I had while at the office in B. entered my name on the books of the Brazen-nose College, Oxford, and resided there one term, not being able to afford the expense attendant on a longer residence. Thus it has been with me through life. Fortune has again and again thrown the means of success in my way, but they have been like the waters of Tantalus, alluring but to escape from my grasp the moment I approached to seize them.

I remained in London only a few days, and then proceeded to

Amsterdam, where I stayed a week, and then went to Paris. After completely exhausting my stock of money, I was compelled to walk back to Calais, which I did with little inconvenience, as I found that money was unnecessary; the only difficulty I met with being how to escape from the overflowing hospitality I every where experienced from rich and poor. My health was much improved when I arrived in town, and I immediately proceeded on foot to Birmingham, where I engaged with Doctor Palmer, a celebrated physician, to supply the Greek and Latin synonymes, and correct the press for a dictionary of the terms used by the French in medicine, which he was preparing. The pay I received was so very small that I was again reduced to the poorest and most meagre diet; and an attack of pleurisy produced such a state of debility that I was compelled to leave Birmingham and return to my mother's house in Kenilworth.

I had now firmly resolved to free myself from my fatal habit; and the very day I reached home I began to diminish the quantity I was then taking by one grain per day. I received the most careful attention, and every thing was done that could add to my comfort and alleviate the sufferings I must inevitably undergo. Until I had arrived at seventeen and a half grains a day I experienced but little uneasiness, and my digestive organs acquired or regained strength very rapidly. All constipation had vanished. My skin became moist and more healthy, and my spirits instead of being depressed became equable and cheerful. No visions haunted my sleep. I could not sleep however more than two or three hours at a time; and from about three a. m. until eight, when I took my opium, I was restless, and troubled with a gnawing, twitching sensation in the stomach. From seventeen grains downward my torment (for by that word alone can I characterize the pangs I endured) commenced. I could not rest, either lying, sitting or standing. I was compelled to change my position every moment; and the only thing that relieved me was walking about the country. My sight became weak and dim; the gnawing at my stomach was perpetual, resembling the sensation caused by ravenous hunger; but food, though I ate voraciously, would not relieve me. I also felt a sinking in the stomach, and such pain in the back that I could not straighten myself up. A dull constant aching pain took possession of the calves of my legs; and there was a continual jerking motion of the nerves from head to foot. My head ached; my intellect was terribly weakened and confused. I could not think, talk, read or write; to sleep was impossible, until by walking from morning till night I had so thoroughly tired myself that pain could not keep me awake; although I was so weak that walking was misery to me. And yet under all these *désagrémens* I did not feel dejected in spirits; although I became unable to walk, and used to lie on the floor and roll about in agony for hours together. I should certainly have taken opium again, if the chemist had not, by my mother's instruction, refused to sell it. I became worse every day; and it was not till I had entirely left off the drug, two months nearly, that

any alleviation of my suffering was perceptible. I gradually but very slowly recovered my strength, both of mind and body; though it was long before I could read or write, or even converse. My appetite was too good; for though while an opium-eater I could not endure to taste the smallest morsel of fat, I now could eat at dinner a pound of bacon which had not a hair's breadth of lean in it.

The fifteenth of May was the first day I was entirely free from pain. Previous to my arrival in Kenilworth, an intimate friend of mine had been ruined—reduced at once from affluence to utter penury by the villany of his partner, to whom he had intrusted the whole of his business, and who had committed two forgeries, for which he was sentenced to transportation for life. In consequence of this event, my friend, who was a little older than myself, and had been about twelve months married, determined to leave his young wife and child, and seek to rebuild his broken fortunes in Canada. When he informed me that such was his plan, I resolved to accompany him, and immediately commenced the necessary preparations for my voyage. I was not however ready, not having been able so soon to collect the sum necessary, when he was obliged to leave; and as I could not have him for my *compagnon du voyage*, I altered my course and took my passage for New-York, in the vain hope and expectation of obtaining a better income here, where the ground was comparatively unoccupied, than in London, where there were hundreds of men as well qualified as myself, dependent on literature for their support.

I need not add how lamentably I was disappointed. The first inquiries I made were met by advice to endeavor to obtain a livelihood by some other profession than authorship. I could get no employment as a reporter; and the applications I addressed to the editors of several of the daily newspapers received no answer. My prospects appeared as gloomy as they could well be, and my spirits sunk beneath the pressure of the anxious cares which now weighed so heavily upon me. I was alone in a strange country, without an acquaintance into whose ear I might pour the gathering bitterness of my blighted hopes. I was also much distressed by the intense heat of July, which kept me from morning till night in a state much like that occasioned by a vapor-bath. I was so melancholy and hopeless that I really found it necessary to have recourse to either brandy or opium. I preferred the latter, although to ascertain the difference, merely as a philosophical experiment, I took rather copious draughts of the former also. But observe; I did not intend ever again to become the slave of opium. I merely proposed to take three or four grains a day, until I should procure some literary engagement, and until the weather became more cool. All my efforts to obtain such engagements were in vain; and I should undoubtedly have sunk into hopeless despondency, had not a gentleman, (to whom I had brought an order for a small sum of money, twice the amount of which he had insisted on my taking,) perceiving how deeply and injuriously I was affected by my repeated disappointments, offered me two hundred dollars to write



'Passages from the Life of an Opium-Eater,' in two volumes. I gladly accepted this generous and disinterested offer; but before I had written more than two or three sheets, I became disgusted with the subject. I attempted to proceed, but found that my former facility in composition had deserted me; that in fact I could not write. I now discovered that the attempt to leave off opium again would be one of doubtful result. I had increased my quantum to forty grains. I again became careless and inert; and I believe that the short time that had elapsed since I had broken the habit in England had not been sufficient to allow my system to free itself from the poison which had been so long undermining its powers. I could not at once leave it off; and in truth I was not very anxious to do so, as it enabled me to forget the difficulties of the situation in which I had placed myself; while I knew that with regained freedom the cares and troubles which had caused me again flee to my destroyer for relief would press upon my mind with redoubled weight. I remained in Brooklyn until November. Since then I have resided in the city, in great poverty; frequently unable to procure a dinner; as the few dollars I received from time to time scarcely sufficed to supply me with opium. Whether I shall now be able to leave off opium, God only knows! But whether I do or not, I have no hope whatever of gaining a respectable livelihood in this country; and I shall therefore return to England the moment I can obtain a passage.

WILLIAM BLAIR.

## L I N E S

TO THE DEPARTED POETESS OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN.

BY 'SIGNET.'

So LONG as Nature breatheth lightly there,  
 So long as Woman bendeth low in prayer;  
 So long as one lone flower remains in bloom,  
 Or mortal man doth kneel beside the tomb;  
 So long as Morning on the earth looks o'er  
 An eastern ocean toward a western shore;  
 So long as Darkness stalks before its gleam,  
 Or Night's last tear-drops sparkle in its beam;  
 So long as sun-beams, following morning light  
 Through Day's dominions to returning Night,  
 Leave their last lustre on an evening cloud,  
 Dark-mantling mountains in a gathering shroud:  
 So long as zephyr o'er that lovely Lake  
 Shall weave her waves, or brooding wild winds wake  
 Her slumbering billows with an evening surge  
 O'er heads of heroes, oft-repeated dirge;  
 Immortal notes from youthful 'LULY's' lay  
 Shall swell in numbers o'er M'DONOUGH'S Bay.

*Green Mountains.*



## THE BANKRUPT MERCHANT'S DWELLING.

THE flowers bloom for another ;  
The fountain floweth there  
With cool and quiet murmur  
Upon the summer air :  
But no fond heart is near it  
To listen to its play ;  
The hand that nursed the roses  
Is far, oh ! far away !

The sad deserted dwelling  
Stands lonely by the stream ;  
The windows shuttered closely,  
Close out the sun's glad beam :  
And grass grows o'er the foot-path  
Where once the happy trod,  
Nor children's steps pass lightly  
Across the bright green sod.

And he who reared the homestead —  
Comes not the thought to him  
Of this old place of meeting,  
When life looks drear and dim ;  
While the city's hum is round him,  
In his low pent-up home,  
Where scent of summer roses  
And cool winds never come ?

Oh ! oft his heart must linger  
On days when hope was bright,  
Nor seemed upon his fortunes  
A sign of change or blight ;  
When he stood here at evening  
Beneath his own roof-tree,  
His gentle wife beside him,  
His children at his knee :

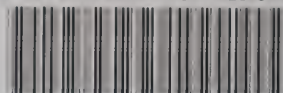
Or out upon the water  
His boat danced far and wide,  
Beneath the silver moon-light  
Upon the flowing tide.  
And now he catches only  
Some glimpses of the sky  
Through piles of city dwellings  
And spires that stretch on high.

Oh ! lone, deserted dwelling !  
Thou art a place of gloom,  
Although the sun is on thee  
And gaily roses bloom :  
For human steps and voices,  
That make the desert glad,  
Are not around thee standing.  
Thou lonely place and sad !

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